



063

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
B.A. (HONOURS)/ B.A. IN ENGLISH  
AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING - LEVEL 3  
FINAL EXAMINATION - January 2025  
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS - LEU3503/LSU1203  
DURATION - THREE HOURS (03 hours)

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DATE: 12. 01. 2025

TIME: 09.30 am. - 12.30pm.

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ANSWER ALL THREE (03) QUESTIONS.

1.

- (a) Comment on the image of the butterfly and how it contributes to the meaning of the following poem.

(15 marks)

Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly  
Asleep on the black trunk,  
Blowing like a leaf in green shadows.  
Down the ravine behind the empty house,  
The dried leaves of the wild grapevine  
Clinging to the blackberries,  
Like the wildness of the world.

I have seen the world so close,  
And yet it is the simple details of the day  
That tell me all I need to know.  
There's no rush, no hurry—  
The quiet of a perfect afternoon  
Wraps me in peace,  
And I watch the butterfly,

Breathe in the quiet air,  
And feel the weight of time slowly lift.

- (b) Comment briefly on how the writer has created atmosphere in the passage given below. **(15 marks)**

The house was deserted, the garden seemed as though it had been left to itself. The rose bushes stood stiff and parched, the papaya tree that had been planted with so much hope and expectation was thick with leaves that were curled and yellowing, and a crow had made its nest in its branches. Even the well was dry, and no green moss covered the brown stone walls. Bim drew in her breath sharply and went inside. The house seemed sunk in a kind of stupor, as though it could not believe that its life was over and still hung on to the remnants of the past. There were patches of damp on the walls, mildew growing in dark patterns of fern and leaf upon the plaster, and the air was heavy with the odor of neglect and decay.

2. Read the following prose passage and comment on its effectiveness as a piece of literary writing. **(30 marks)**

Half a mile from home, at the farther edge of the woods, where the land was highest, a great pine-tree stood, the last of its generation. Whether it was left for a boundary mark, or for what reason, no one could say; the woodchoppers had spared it thirty or forty years before. Its trunk, which rose sixty feet from the ground without a limb, was like a huge mast. The top was not all dead, but the stately head of the old pine towered above the other trees as if it were a great pagoda, and made a landmark for sea and shore miles and miles away. Sylvia knew it well. She had always believed that whoever climbed to the top of it could see the ocean; and the little girl had often laid her hand on the great rough trunk and looked up wistfully at those dark boughs that the wind always stirred, no matter how hot and still the air might be below.

Now she thought of the tree with a new excitement, for why, if one climbed it at break of day, could not one see all the world, and easily discover whence the white heron flew, and mark the place, and find the hidden nest? What a spirit of adventure, what wild ambition! what fancy brought in its train! The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast, the sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons, the pitch made her thin little fingers clumsy and stiff as she went round and round the tree's great stem, higher and higher upward. The sparrows and robins in the woods below were beginning to wake and twitter to the dawn, yet it seemed much lighter there aloft in the pine-tree, and the child knew she must hurry if her project were to be of any use.

The tree seemed to lengthen itself out as she went up, and to reach farther and farther upward. It was like a great main-mast to the voyaging earth; it must truly have been amazed that morning through all its ponderous frame as it felt this determined spark of human spirit wending its way from higher branch to branch. Who knows how steadily the least twigs held themselves to advantage this light, weak creature on her way! The old pine must have loved his new dependent.

3. Choose ONE (01) of the following poems and analyse it comprehensively, commenting on the meaning and how it is conveyed by the techniques and elements of poetry that you have studied in this course. **(40 marks)**

**EITHER**

**a) The Pattern**

I was the girl who trod the coarse  
hessian<sup>1</sup> laid down on the parish hall,  
to save the floorboards.

The one who twirled and twirled  
until the dizzy whirled-up dust

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<sup>1</sup> a strong, coarse fabric made from hemp or jute, used for sacks and upholstery.

filled my head and pressed the tears  
to my eyes and the love-taste  
to my mouth.

I carried my father's dinner  
in a wicker basket covered with a white cloth  
down the lane in the evening.  
I saw the world through a swing-door  
that grunted and sighed each time I pushed it open.  
I was stitched into dresses,  
the patterns of which  
were lost in the heads of dead women.

I was the one who buried my dolls  
one by one in the back garden.  
My prayer for each:  
I'll see you again at the end of the world.

**OR**

**b) For a Girl I Know About to Be a Woman**

This is the time of your life  
when if a man came to take you into a forest  
you might follow. This is the time  
of your life when you might follow a man  
just about anywhere.

This is the time of your life  
when a man's promises can turn the future  
to a field of flowers. This is the time  
of your life when a man can walk in  
and out of your mind.

Don't be ashamed of this. This is the time  
of your life and you have nothing  
to apologize for. But if you do follow,  
take a stick with you and pay attention.  
Take a compass and some bread.

